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THE HAMPSHIRE MEN

(37th Regiment)

IN

UPPER BURMAH,

IN

1889.

BY

Lieut.-Colonel F. COCHRAN,

P.S.C., Barrister-at-Law,

Commanding 1st Battalion The Hampshire Regiment.

London :

ALLEN, SCOTT AND CO., 30, BOUVERIE STREET.

1890.

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PREFACE.

THE confines of Burmah are remote—some of the stations in the Upper Province being farther from England in time-distance than, perhaps, any other place where British troops are quartered round the globe. Possibly this may be the reason why so little is heard at home of what soldiers are still doing there.

Greater interest appears to be taken in—or, at all events, more reports are sent concerning—doings nearer home—for instance, in Egypt—although much harder work, greater exposure, and loss of life is going on in an immensely more trying climate.

All that usually appears in the newspapers is some such meagre paragraph as this:—"Numerous petty engagements with Dacoits are reported from Upper Burmah."

For these reasons, and because nearly all the men now serving in the old 37th Regiment belong to Hampshire, it has occurred to me that a short narrative of our recent doings there may not be without some interest to many friends.

In the hope that this surmise may be correct, I venture to publish the following pages.

THE HAMPSHIRE MEN IN UPPER BURMAH.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER a sojourn of nearly three years at Secunderabad, in the Madras Presidency, the 1st Battalion the Hampshire Regiment left on the 26th and 27th October, 1888, in two trains for Madras, *en route* to Upper Burmah. No families were allowed to accompany the battalion, all the women and children being left at Secunderabad. A large concourse of friends gathered at the Trimulgherry platform, where the troops entrained, and, if one may judge from the manner in which the officers were fêted during the last week, it was evident that the Mindens had succeeded in making themselves popular in Hyderabad, and left amidst general regret.

The following order was issued by Major-General Gib, C.B., on the occasion of the regiment leaving his command :—

“ The 1st Battalion the Hampshire Regiment being about to quit the district, the Major-General Commanding has much pleasure in placing on record his thorough satisfaction with the way in which all ranks have borne themselves, both on parade and in quarters, since their arrival in Secunderabad in February, 1886.

"In bidding farewell to the corps, the Major-General congratulates Lieut.-Colonel Cochran in taking with him a regiment in such an efficient condition."

In India, troops moving by rail travel only at night, halting in what is called a rest camp (merely some bare tents) during the heat of the day. After spending three nights in the train, and two days at Wadi and Gooty, we reached Madras. There were no absentees, nor had we a single case of drunkenness on the departure of the regiment, a state of things which testifies highly to the good behaviour of the Hampshire men. We found the rain coming down in sheets, and a cyclone approaching the coast, an event not infrequent at this season of the year, when the N.E. monsoon has set in. From a bad port like Madras, such a state of things makes the embarkation of troops an extremely unpleasant and difficult business, as we shortly discovered to our cost. Altogether, we had a bad time in Madras, which, indeed, was partly anticipated, as the 2nd Battalion (the 67th) experienced similar discomfort when embarking for Burmah in 1885.

After a soaking march of about one mile from the station we took over tents, pitched for us on the glacis of Fort St. George, which had already all the appearance of a quagmire. During the whole of this day it rained in torrents, and, with a rising wind and falling glass, had all the appearance of so continuing. Under these unpropitious circumstances I was glad, towards evening, to accept a hospitable offer made by the officer commanding the Duke of Cornwall's Regiment (late 32nd Light Infantry and old comrades of the 37th) to double up my whole force of 900 men in the barracks within the fort, considering that—although the men were tightly packed, lying like herrings in rows on the floor—the advantages of a roof compensated for over-crowding. The men were already all drenched to the skin, and their kits and bedding soaked, with no chance of drying till the sun should beam on

them again. Some of the officers were supplied with beds by the 32nd; vacant but furnitureless quarters were assigned to the others, and the A.A.G. kindly offered me a room.

Such a night followed that we all felt glad indeed that the regiment had moved from camp, although this entailed a second drenching. Even comfortably housed as I was, the howling wind, the crash of falling tiles and lattices, and the noise of sheets of pelting rain disturbed one's rest. A telegram arrived warning the officials of an approaching cyclone which was expected to strike the coast near Madras—the danger signal was hoisted, and all the vessels (the "Clive," in which we were to sail, among the number) steamed out to sea to avoid being driven on shore.

The following morning our camp was a sight to behold. Tents in all kinds of fantastic shapes—some prone on the ground, others torn literally to ribbons, poles sticking through the fallen canvas, etc. Had time permitted, it would have been interesting to have had the scene photographed: "The camp of the 1st Btn. the Hampshire Regiment, the morning of their departure from India." The storm lasted two days, the second night being, if possible, worse than the first; huge trees uprooted lay about, all telegraph communication was stopped, seventeen artillery horses were killed.

The third morning, 30th October, the weather having moderated, the "Clive" returned inside the breakwater, and the embarkation of the heavy baggage commenced—a long and laborious process, as all had to be carried by coolies from the beach, through a strong surf, into *Masula** boats.

Suddenly, we on shore were surprised to see the "Clive" again steam out to sea with our baggage party on board, under Captain Macdonald, leaving behind her a crowd of baggage-laden boats, which had

*A surf boat.

to return and unload again—a very damaging process for boxes and cases. It subsequently appeared that she had been ordered out to assist a steamer of the British India S. Navigation Company, disabled by the cyclone. We had now to wait till our ship returned, which she did on the 3rd November, it being originally intended to sail on the 1st.

The remainder of the heavy baggage was quickly despatched, and under a burning sun commenced the embarkation of the men. Again I longed for a photographer to depict the scene, which was bright, animated and amusing. A line of boats was drawn up along the shore, the men in parties of twelve; one company at a time were formed on the beach in front of their boats, and at a given signal the swarthy and all but naked boatmen seized "Tommy," with rifle, kit, etc., and carried him bodily, amid much jabber, shouts, and laughter, through the surf, depositing him feet foremost over the high gunwale of the boat, into which he tumbled.

The men seemed delighted with this novel process, especially when our respected bandmaster, who weighs many stone, and had to be carried in a chair, was removed in a like summary manner. We sailed the same afternoon, the band playing, and enlivening us every evening afterwards. The trip across the Bay of Bengal was most pleasant, with a calm sea, and an excellent commander in Captain Creagh; wonderful to say, little sickness resulted from the exposure at Madras, only a few cases of rheumatism.

Reaching Rangoon on the 8th November, we at once set to work unloading the heavy baggage—a severe day's work in such a climate—as it had to be taken out of the "Clive," packed on carts, then moved two miles up the river, and repacked in two steamers for different destinations, to avoid mixing. In consequence of the delay at Madras, it was necessary to hurry on with this, the "Clive" being booked for another regiment next day.

As the whole duty of moving baggage, including stowing in the hold, has to be done by the unskilled labour of soldiers, and usually in a limited time, so as to sail at the appointed hour, much damage and consequent loss necessarily ensues in every move—packages put in anyhow—possibly some light cases of champagne below, with a few chests of drawers, or arm chests on the top of them. The result may be imagined.

The chief point of interest in Rangoon is the Grand Pagoda—Shway-Dagon—which is thickly gilded all over. Coming up the river, approaching Rangoon, it forms a remarkable and brilliant object, with the sun shining on its gold.

The stranger here is also struck with the fine breed of ponies, the sleekness of the bullocks, and the handsome boulevards containing excellent shops. Bells, gongs, and carved wood are the chief specialities.

Another notable, but unpleasant, feature is the mosquito, huge and striped. These torments do not give the warning sting of their Indian cousin, but they are more active and venomous, and not to be denied. One locality famed for them has been named Mosquito Creek, and here they say even horses should be protected by net curtains.

Before leaving Secunderabad, orders had been issued that, on arrival in Burmah, headquarters and two companies would be stationed at Shwebo, two at Bernardmyo, and four at Bhamo. In accordance with these instructions, a separation of baggage was made, and all arrangements to tranship at Rangoon into two boats.

Headquarters with A, F, D, and G companies, destined for Shwebo and Bernardmyo, embarked on the Indian marine gun-boat "Irrawaddy," while the remaining companies, bound for Bhamo, sailed in the "Sladen." The former boat was the pilot ship in the expedition under Sir Harry Prendergast in 1885, and the latter belonged formerly to King Theebaw, and

was captured by us. Each of these steamers had two huge double-decked flats lashed alongside, on which the men were quartered. The boats left Rangoon together on the 9th November, and after an unhappy night in Mosquito Creek reached Prome on the 13th.

Crossing the frontier of Upper Burmah we soon passed the forts at Minhla, one of which was attacked and carried by the 2nd Battalion (67th) in the expedition of 1885, and Captain Macdonald, who was present at that affair, described the operation. At Minghan we met the Rifle Brigade, and heard that General Faunce with a large force had just started on the Chindwin expedition.

Mandalay was reached on the 20th without further incident. Here the Major-General, Sir George White, V.C., K.C.B., with some of his staff, came on board and inspected us. The General directed us to march up to the palace, which is about four miles from the shore. We paraded early next morning, and had a very dusty march through broad streets and crowds of natives. The number of dead dogs passed was remarkable, and it subsequently appeared that an order had recently been issued to destroy them. The numberless pariahs in Burmah are a perfect pest. Since the Burman objects to take life, these animals increase and multiply beyond all belief.

The Palace of Mandalay has often been portrayed; suffice it to say that the beauty, grace, and gorgeousness of its gilded pagodas and monasteries baffles description, and the grotesqueness of the griffins, dragons, and monsters must be seen to be appreciated. These magnificent structures are mostly built of wood, and the carving is often elaborate and highly finished. The town is surrounded by a fine wall, surmounted by turrets, and a moat. The shape is square, facing the four points of the compass, each side over a mile in length.

Inside the town a strong teakwood stockade encloses

the palace with its grounds. The whole of this area has been cleared of native dwellings, and now forms a fine open cantonment, occupied only by the palace buildings, monasteries, barrack, and houses of Europeans.

After inspection by Sir George, the Norfolk Regiment supplied the men with breakfast, and we marched back to the steamers, starting again about noon up the river.

While at Mandalay the Major-General mentioned that some officers were required for an expedition which was to proceed from Bhamo against several Kachyen tribes, where severe fighting was anticipated. Fifty Hampshire men were to form the nucleus of this expeditionary force. Lieut. O'Donnell of the Goorkha Police, who had done yeoman service on a previous expedition, and consequently knew the country well, had been already selected for the command; but the General, remembering Captain Macdonald's good service in former fighting in Burmah with the 2nd Battalion (67th), said he would be glad to have him with this force, as second in command, if he would waive his rank and serve under Lieutenant O'Donnell. This Captain Macdonald willingly consented to do, so he, with Second Lieutenant Richards, was detailed to go with the Hampshire men, and Lieutenant Hawker with the Goorkha Police.

And now the separation of the regiment began, for on the 22nd the "Irrawaddy" made fast at Kyoukmoung, the landing-place for Shwebo. The "Sladen" soon passed us on her way to Bhamo, our men giving her a parting cheer as she steamed by. These four companies, under command of Major Dunn, had a tedious journey, spending several days stranded on sandbanks in the river, ere they reached their destination. One man died of fever on board.

At Kyoukmoung we at once commenced landing the baggage, the whole of the men being in turn employed on this fatigues, a trying duty in these latitudes.

Kyoukmoung is not a very inviting spot to land at, for the first time, in a strange country, and did not give us a very cheerful impression of our future home.

There is nothing here in the shape of pier or wharf, only the natural bank of the river—a very steep and muddy one. It was no joke climbing the slippery ascent with heavy packages. We now discovered that many boxes had been smashed or damaged in transit, and, opening my saddle-box to get out my riding gear, I found the contents saturated with water, leather mildewed, steel eaten through by rust, and this although the wooden box contained a tin lining. It had probably been allowed to fall into the sea at Madras.

As soon as the necessary number of mules and Burman bullock-carts had been collected, and the packages made up to 80lb. loads for the mules, the baggage started with a strong guard under Captain Knox.

They left Kyoukmoung about 5 o'clock in the evening, and although it was a moonlight night, the tail of the baggage did not reach Shwebo till 4 a.m., owing to the breaking of the axle of a cart and the bad condition of the road.

Reveille sounded at 2 a.m., we marched by bright moonlight, and after a cup of coffee half-way, sent on with the baggage guard, we accomplished the 17 miles at a good pace, considering the men had been boxed up in ship or train for nearly a month. Six carts had been provided for the sick, but they were not required, and not a single man fell out.

After the disembarkation of headquarters, and two companies at Kyoukmoung, the "Irrawaddy" proceeded up the river with the other two companies under Major Garfit, with Lieutenant Nugent and Second-Lieut. Ozzard to Thabeitkyn, the landing place for Bernardmyo. A cart road is now available for three marches to Shwenyoungbin, beyond which a mule path leads by

a very steep ascent, two more marches to Bernardmyo, which is nearly 6,000 feet above the sea. The troops reached their destination without further incident.

The approach to Shwebo is rather pretty. Across a large open plain the spires of the many pagodas of this ancient capital, glittering in the sun, give the appearance at a distance of a modern city. On approaching the stockade, however, this illusion vanishes, and life in Burmah in all its comfortless reality forces itself on the imagination. A bamboo stockade, about half a mile long by 200 yards broad, encloses a few Phoongee-houses or kyongs and wooden huts. These form the military cantonment, and contain two companies European troops and four 27th Madras Infantry. The officers' huts are very simple structures, constructed of timber posts and bamboo matting woven walls. The roof, which is detached from the walls, except by the corner supports, leaving several feet of space between, is thatched with dried grass, and scarcely gives effective shelter from sun or rain.

The plank floors are some five feet from the ground, and underneath pariahs and fowls congregate. Each officer has one apartment or stall (for the partition between does not extend to the roof) about fifteen feet square, with a tiny bath-room attached. The latter is provided with holes in the floor for the water to escape into the ground beneath—a primitive and simple arrangement.

Close to the military stockade are the massive brick walls, partly in ruins, of the ancient city; for at one time Shwebo was the capital of Burmah, containing the King's Palace, and was the birthplace of Alaunpra, the founder of the dynasty of that name.

Life in Shwebo cannot be described as lively. There is a little shooting in the vicinity, snipe, wild duck of various kinds, teal, and wild geese, but expeditions beyond the immediate neighbourhood entail an escort of mounted infantry. One day our bag consisted of

four geese, three teal, two ducks, and twenty snipe. There are plenty of leopards about, but these are rarely seen. The men play cricket occasionally when off duty; the bands of the Native Infantry and our own enliven us one day in the week at the tennis ground, and another evening at mess. Most of the officers in the station meet at lawn tennis in the evening, and night is made lively by the hourly call of the sentries round the stockade, "All's well," and the wranglings of pariah dogs beneath our huts.

The first little excitement we had after arrival was an outbreak in the jail, which is full of notorious dacoits. Returning from snipe-shooting at dusk, a bugle sounding the alarm greeted me on entering the stockade, and several shots were fired in quick succession. A passing police officer hurriedly informed me that the dacoits in jail had broken out, overpowered their police guard, and were attacking the village. On the parade ground F Company had fallen in, silent and ready with rifles and ammunition. Captain Knox reported all present, and I ordered him to the scene of the disturbance. The non-commissioned officer commanding the mounted infantry was also directed to the jail with his men. Turning to look for A Company, and not seeing it, I left Captain and Paymaster Gompertz in charge of the stockade, and rode to the jail myself.

There I found all our men quietly drawn up outside. The missing Company A under Second-Lieut. Robson, having been sent there by the Deputy Commissioner, was first on the spot. Proceeding to the gate, I stumbled over the body of a dead havildar at the entrance, and saw by the light of a lantern several dead bodies inside, one on the top of another. Colonel Swifte (the officer commanding the station) now informed me that order had been restored, a guard of native infantry would be left for the night, and I might march my men home. The Hampshires were afterwards com-

mended for the prompt way in which they had turned out on this occasion.

I subsequently ascertained the substance of what had happened. The dacoits, most of whom are of the worst class, awaiting trial for murder, had just returned from work. Seeing the gate open, they seized the arms of the guard, made a dash, a short struggle followed—the details of which it was difficult to gather—with the result: one police havildar and seven dacoits killed, four police and five dacoits wounded.

No doubt some of these implicated in this outbreak will be hanged.

Most of the dacoits in the Shwebo jail are of the tattooed class. King Theebaw used to tattoo these rascals on the wrist with the words, "Take care, Be good," for the first offence, and if caught a second time the offender's head was chopped off.

The office of hangman is one not perhaps much sought after, and our Deputy Commissioner was rather anxious about getting an efficient successor to the present functionary, a private of the Cheshire Regiment. He was, therefore, much relieved when one morning the retiring hangman appeared before him, looking very jubilant, and saying, "Make your mind easy, sir, I've got him," produced a volunteer from the Hampshire Regiment for that loathsome office. The remuneration is Rs.10 for each man hanged. A man is also told off to slay pariah dogs, which are so serious a nuisance, and he earns two annas per tail for dogs, and eight annas for bitches.

A bill such as the following might be sent in:—

To	Rs.	As.
Three men hanged	30	0
Six dogs' tails	0	12

Rs.30 12

On the 14th December I set out for Bhamo to see

the Mogoung expedition start, which was to punish some Kachyen tribes who had been interfering with the jade trade and creating disturbances in that district. The Irrawaddy passes through two defiles between Bhamo and Kyoukmoung. The scenery in the upper one is remarkably fine, the river winding through a range of hills; an immense volume of water passes rapidly through a much narrowed channel, with grand cliffs and woods on both banks.

There is little cultivation to be seen on this upper reach of the river: magnificent timber; interminable virgin forests on either side, the home of the tiger, leopard, and wild elephant.

Shortly after leaving Kyoukmoung the lofty mountain range containing the Ruby Mines district is passed. Dense fogs usually prevail over the river in the morning, and the steamers—which always anchor at night, the navigation being extremely difficult owing to shifting sandbanks—cannot start till the sun clears away the mist.

On account of the lowness of the river our boat could not get up as far as Bhamo, and had to stop about four miles below. I was fortunate enough to get a seat in a steam launch which came down for the mails. The steep high bank where we stopped has no wharf or even path, and the elephant grass grows twenty feet high, and extends down to the water's edge. Here we found an unfortunate native infantry regiment (the 6th Madras) encamped in the jungle. Having a case of cholera they were not permitted to enter Bhamo.

On arrival I inspected the detachment for the expedition, Captain Macdonald, Second Lieutenant Richards, and fifty Hampshire men. Everything was complete and ready for the start, two men's kit wrapped in one waterproof sheet, ammunition, spades, axes, etc., all packed for mule transport.

The party was to move in the lightest marching order—no tents. A group was taken by an itinerant

photographer, who came up to take views of the defiles, etc.

The Kachyen tribes in close proximity to Bhamo are still troublesome, patrols being sent out nightly; and the mounted infantry take weekly trips ten to fifteen miles in the jungle. The two guns with the detachment of the Mountain Battery which accompanied the expedition looked most serviceable—fit for anything—carried as they were, by magnificent mules.

The 17th Bengal Infantry supplied a contingent of 170 rank and file, and about 500 Goorkha police were to join later on.

The main party left Bhamo in boats on the 22nd December.

Poor Lieutenant Hawker had rather a difficult job cut out for him on this occasion. He was ordered to start at daybreak with forty ponies for the police, which had to commence the journey by land. Saddles were supplied which had never been fitted, and to assist him only four wild-looking Shans, fresh caught from the jungle, who knew nothing of ponies or saddles. They looked filthy, dull, and stupid, and Lieutenant Hawker knew nothing of their language. An unfordable river—the Taping—had to be crossed on the first day's march without boats. Moreover these Shans had each received a month's pay in advance, so would probably desert on the first opportunity. All arrangements for the expedition were made by Colonel Little, the Commandant at Bhamo, and I was relieved to hear eventually that another officer and six more Shans were sent to assist Lieutenant Hawker in crossing the river.

On my return journey down the river, we anchored for the night at Katha. Hearing the music of a pewé in the village I went on shore to see the show, a chaplain, the Rev. C. Parker, who was a fellow passenger, accompanying me.

This entertainment, which is one of the most popular

among the Burmans, consists of dramatic representations, music, and dancing. No one pays anything, except the giver of the *pewé*, who fees the performers—usually itinerant professionals. The fun goes on all night long, the Burman taking a sleep, and waking up again to relight his cheroot and laugh at the performance.

On this occasion the *pièce de résistance*—marionettes—was cleverly done. A plant or two on the stage represented a forest, and figures of all sorts—monkeys, parrots, horses, princes, princesses, and priests—appeared, gesticulated, and danced, keeping time to the music. Truly a simple and very innocent amusement. Anyone can walk in, there being no invitations, and, as the Burman never drinks, no drunkenness.

On first arrival at Shwebo we took over thirty ponies and gear from the Cheshire regiment, and a troop of mounted infantry was speedily organized under Lieutenant and Adjutant Wyld. All these men had already been trained in the 7th Hussars' riding-school at Secunderabad, and were soon smart in their duties. About the 19th December they were sent out at the request of the Deputy Commissioner, after a dacoit gang, but came back in ten days without having found them, although they scoured the country well.

On the 16th January, when we were all at mess, and the band playing, a telegram from Bernardmyo was handed to me, which startled and grieved us all, for we had thought the Ruby Mines was the quietest of districts—"Lieutenant Nugent and Private Roberts killed, and six men wounded." The band was at once stopped, and the party broke up. Another telegram arrived later from Mandalay ordering an officer to proceed immediately with twenty-five Hants men to replace Lieutenant Nugent. Second Lieutenant Robson and the men who were detailed for this duty quickly got ready, and started at daybreak next morning, a company of the 27th Madras Infantry under Second

Lieutenant Burton accompanying them, as reinforcements to the Ruby Mines command.

Bulletins containing the latest news—names of the wounded, their condition, and gravity of the wounds, etc., were posted up for the men's information. In these they naturally took a keen interest.

Some time elapsed, however, before full details of this sad affair were received, there being only one post a week from Bernardmyo, and a letter taking five days to reach Shwebo from that place.

An account of the engagement will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

RUBY MINES AND MÔMEIT.

UP to September, 1888, the garrison of the Ruby Mines district consisted of two companies of British troops and four of Goorkhas, with a company of the 27th Madras Infantry at Thabeitkyn.

The Goorkhas, who are born jungle fighters and much dreaded by dacoits, were withdrawn in September, 1888, and the 19th Madras Infantry (which relieved them), did not arrive till the middle of March, 1889.

It does not appear why the district was left thus weakened so long, unless it be that it had gained a good reputation, having remained quiet since its first occupation by Brigadier-General Stewart two years before. Be this as it may, it will be seen from what follows that disturbers took advantage of the absence of the formidable Goorkhas.

In consequence of several petty dacoities in December it was found necessary first to move a company of the 27th Madras Infantry from Shwebo to Shwenyounbin, and about the end of the year the Deputy

Commissioner requested Major Garfit to send a detachment from Bernardmyo to Mogôk, which was threatened.

Lieutenant Nugent and fifty Hants men were despatched to Mogôk, which is by mule track about ten miles distant from Bernardmyo, over a stiff mountain pass. Mogôk is the headquarters of the ruby mining industry, and also of the Deputy-Commissioner of the district, and the Military Police Battalion.

The Ruby Mines district comprises a tract of country on the left bank of the Irrawaddy, extending for about 70 to 100 miles east and west, by 15 to 20 north and south. It consists of a lofty range of forest-clad mountains, which, gradually ascending from the river, culminate in Tong Meh (the black mountain) 7,555 feet above the sea.

The whole district, with the exception of a few paddy fields in the valleys, is one mass of dense jungle and magnificent forest. The jungle, which is in many parts quite impenetrable by Europeans, is composed chiefly of bamboo and tall elephant grass. The forests contain splendid specimens of timber; in the lower regions the teak flourishes; in the higher the grand trees are frequently covered with orchids. Wild plantains grow almost everywhere. The wild rose, strawberry, and raspberry are plentiful in the upper valleys, while the lower have long been renowned for deadly malaria.

Perhaps the most striking feature in this remarkable district is the stillness—the utter absence of life. No song birds—save the singing of huge tree crickets, not a sound of any kind is heard—scarcely a sign of animal life. A sense of utter loneliness impresses the traveller through these vast solitudes.

The difficulty in operating with regular troops in such a close country is obvious. You cannot get at your agile enemy, who, nearly naked, slips with ease through

his native jungle, where the belted British soldier has difficulty in following him.

In the times of the Burmese kings this mountainous district was used as a penal settlement to which criminals were deported. It is said that persons venturing into these wild fastnesses rarely returned; one of three things generally befell them: they died of fever, were dacoited, or joined the dacoit bands.

The tract of country adjoining the district on the north is the Tsawbwaship of Momeit, held by a quasi-independent ruler who pays tribute to the British Government. The incumbent at this time was a weak, characterless boy. He possessed no regular troops, but collected levies when pressed by dacoit bands, and his government, if it deserves the name, was of the feeblest description. The population is of a most mixed character, composed of Shans, Burmans, Kachyens, and Palongs, and on the west from the mountains various unruly Kachyen tribes were perpetually raiding.

Momeit,* the principal town or village, is, however, the crossing point of a considerable trade between Mainlon, Tongpine, Namkan, and the river, and therefore of some importance.

About the end of the year (1888) the Deputy-Commissioner considered it advisable to support the Tsawbwa, who apparently was unable to hold his own, and at his request Major Garfit sent Lieutenant Nugent with fifty Hants men from Mogök to Momeit.

The territory of Momeit is mostly in the plains, not many feet above the Irrawaddy. To reach it from Mogök or Bernardymo entails a tremendous descent of nearly 5,000 feet, involving a complete change of climate from almost keen mountain air to the muggy, depressing heat, and feverish region of the terai.

* Or Momeik.

Two long and difficult marches by a path only passable by mules and men in single file have to be traversed to reach Momeit from Mogòk. The former place had never before been visited by British troops, and there was, of course, no proper accommodation. They were bivouacked under the shelter of a shed, and rationed on tinned meat—generally known as “bully-beef”—and so-called biscuit, which must be seen and tasted to be appreciated.

A large gang, about 700 strong, said to consist chiefly of Kachyens, occupied at this time a place called Bing-bon, distant north-east about five marches from Momeit, and in that territory. This force was nominally under Prince Sawyanine, a grandson of the late King of Burmah, Mindone-Min. He, however, only acted as a figure-head—a rallying point for filibusters and dacoits—being in reality a characterless puppet, and was called by the Burmans “the Jungle Prince.” He possessed, nevertheless, considerable power and influence, having married a Kachyen princess, and was, therefore, supported by some Kachyen tribes. This Prince nominated as his generals Kan Klein and Wayahnan, and gave out that when he had disposed of the English garrisons he should be King of Burmah, and Kan Klein Tsawbwa of Momeit.

On the morning of the 14th January, Lieutenant Nugent's small force was reduced to twenty-four men, twenty having gone out with Lieutenant Anderson, the commandant of the military police battalion, to reconnoitre in the direction of Bing-bon, and six men having been sent up to Bernardmyo for more rations.

About 10 A.M. on this day information reached the Tsawbwa, that the advanced guard of the Prince's force was stockaded in a village (Mobon), only ten miles from Momeit.

Lieutenant Nugent, who was unfortunately without a civil officer, and had no one to consult, on receiving

information of this through his interpreter, at once decided to attack. Leaving eight men under Sergeant Cooke to garrison Momeit, he marched with Sergeant Bevis and fifteen privates, preceded by some of the Tsawbwa's troops.

After marching about ten miles the party reached a village called Mobon, where Lieutenant Nugent expected to find the dacoits, not knowing that there were two villages of the same name.

This place was found to be occupied by the Tsawbwa's troops, and Lieutenant Nugent naturally imagined he had been misled, and remarked to Sergeant Bevis, "We will go a few miles further, but I don't expect to catch them to-day."

The party resumed their march, the Hampshire men now in front, along a narrow path in single file, and had gone about two miles, when on turning a corner a stockade was observed about two hundred yards ahead—white flags (the emblem of royalty) flying at its gate, which was ominously closed. As soon as the dacoits inside saw our men, they began to beat their tom-toms and blow horns. On this the Tsawbwa's troops bolted, firing off their weapons in the air. The jungle here opened out somewhat in front of the stockaded village, and Nugent gave the command, "Front form company. Fix bayonets. Advance." When about thirty yards from the stockade, the dacoits delivered a heavy volley, by which eight out of the small party of sixteen were struck, including poor Nugent. Private Roberts was killed on the spot. Seeing half his party disabled, and probably considering a further attack useless with his few able men against such odds—number of dacoits in stockade estimated at two hundred—Lieutenant Nugent gave the order to get the wounded from under fire and retire. The few men who were able had meanwhile got under cover of a slight fold in the ground, and were keeping up fire on the stockade.

While himself assisting Private James, who was

dangerously wounded, Lieutenant Nugent was again struck, a little below the left breast, this time mortally.

Sergeant Bevis now took command, rallied his small party round their fallen officer, and seeing the dacoits—now emboldened, observing, no doubt, the small numbers opposed to them—coming out at the gate, ordered his men to fire a volley. This caused the enemy to retire inside the stockade, and our party was molested no more. Stretchers were improvised with rifles and bamboos for Lieutenant Nugent and Private James, the other wounded managing at first to walk.

It has been mentioned that Private Roberts was killed by the first volley. Nugent, after his first wound, observing that Roberts was dead, said to his men, "Never mind him; they can't hurt him now; look to the others." The body was left on the field. Some accoutrements were subsequently picked up in the river, and after the fight of the 19th the head was found hung up by the nose on a tree.

The party made a halt at the village before mentioned which they had passed marching out, and here the gallant Nugent breathed his last. By dint of much pressure and promise of reward, Sergeant Bevis obtained assistance from the Tsawbwa's troops to carry the body and the bad cases to Momeit.

One man was sent back from here with a note stating shortly what had occurred, and asking help for the wounded. Sergeant Cook, who as we have seen was left with only eight men to hold Momeit, on receipt of the news, at once despatched a native runner to Bernardmyo, demanding reinforcements.

The death of Lieutenant Nugent was deeply felt in the regiment. Besides the loss to the army of a highly promising and most efficient young officer, his brother officers deplore the untimely death of a friend and comrade distinguished among us for his kindly disposition and quiet, sterling character. He will long be missed

in the cricket field, and in his late company (F). He has, however, left us a bright example, and has met a soldier's death in the performance of duty.

Sergeant Bevis was much commended for his coolness and gallant conduct under fire, a special report having been called for from headquarters. He was at once promoted colour-sergeant in recognition of his good service, and has since been granted the distinguished service medal.

The privates who formed Nugent's party were :—

D COMPANY.

Private Cooper, I. (wounded).
 „ Cotts, G.
 „ Fielder, W.
 „ Hanson, P. (wounded slightly).
 „ James, P. (wounded dangerously).
 „ Powell, F.
 „ Roberts, H. (killed).
 „ Nunnery, A. (wounded severely).
 „ Winter, J.
 „ Woods, N.
 „ Trotman, W.

G COMPANY.

Private Barnes, E. (wounded).
 „ Holdaway, J.
 „ O'Connor, W. (wounded slightly).
 „ Tiller, W.

A Burman interpreter and a guide.

Immediately the news reached Bernardmyo, Major Garfit despatched Second Lieutenant Ozzard and twenty men. These marched by moonlight twenty-four miles by a path which apparently was unknown before, for parties had actually marched by Mogòk to Momeit, using two sides of a triangle instead of the third. Although taking the wrong turning at a branching of paths, this party made a most creditable march, reaching Momeit early the following morning.

Lieutenant Anderson, who returned promptly to Momeit on hearing of the affair of the 14th, made a careful reconnaissance of the village of Mobon, the scene of the recent fight, from a neighbouring hill, and decided from which side to attack again. Marching by night, a party consisting of Second Lieutenant Ozzard and fifty Hants men, with Lieutenant Anderson and twenty military police, surprised and carried the stockade at dawn on the 19th, killing a leader Boh Nga. Success was on this occasion most complete, with the loss of only one man, Private Carpenter, Hants Regiment, who was killed by the discharge of a jingal at the first rush. There were no other casualties. Twenty dead bodies of the enemy were counted, but it subsequently appeared that many more were put *hors de combat*, and evidently a severe lesson had been inflicted. The Tsawbwa's troops were judiciously posted under cover at various points on the opposite side of the village to the attack, and the dacoits, rushing out in panic, were met by a fire at each place where they attempted to break through; and, had these auxiliaries behaved better, scarcely a man could have escaped. The fight was witnessed by the Deputy-Commissioner from the hill from which Lieutenant Anderson had before reconnoitred, and he declared that it was the best affair he had yet seen in Burmah. The stockade was demolished, and the troops returned to Momeit.

Second Lieutenant Ozzard had a narrow escape on this occasion, for when charging along the path to the assault, at the head of his men, he was warned by Lieutenant Anderson to get off the direct road which led to the gate, and no sooner had he done so than Private Carpenter, who was close behind him, was struck dead by the fire of a jingal, which was laid so as to discharge its contents along the path.

To return to Shwebo. Although affairs were quieter there than in the Ruby Mines district, the Hampshire

men had not been altogether idle. The mounted infantry under Sergeant Lawson went out on a ten days' dour, and succeeded in killing two dacoits, one of them a "Boh," on whose head a reward of Rs. 500 had been put. They wounded five others, five escaping.

Except the killing of some six traders by dacoits on the Kyoukmoung road, nothing of any importance happened till the 2nd of February.

CHAPTER III.

RUBY MINES DISTRICT AND MOMEIT.

ON the 4th February, in compliance with a telegram from Sir G. White, appointing me to the command of the Ruby Mines district military and police, for offensive operations, intended to clear the country of dacoits, I started with my Adjutant by the first available steamer from Kyoukmoung.

Landing at Thabeitkyn, where Lieutenant Anderson had been sent to meet us, telegraphic instructions were received from the Chief Commissioner to the effect that the first object was to clear the roads and restore order in the district, secondly to hold Momeit and its villages, and smash any or all the gangs which had created the recent disturbances. Information also reached me from Mandalay that eighty mounted military police from that place, and two companies 27th Madras Infantry had been ordered from Thagein, as reinforcements.

Before forming any plans it was necessary to see the Deputy Commissioner, so learning from Lieutenant Anderson that Mr. Colquhoun was at Mogôk, we marched rapidly to that place, inspecting the different stockaded stages—Wapyadaung, Kyouk-le-bin, Shwenyoungbin, Kabein, Kathée—on the road. We did the journey, about seventy miles, in four days. Of course this

distance could be accomplished in a much shorter time, but there being no accommodation or supplies, except bare huts, at each halting place, double marches are difficult, as carts cannot be left behind. Even riding, a great part of the way must be done at a walking pace, owing to the roughness and steepness of the paths—in some places mere rocky steps.

On the road a telegram told us that, on account of a police disaster at Sikaw, it was desirable to push on, and, if possible, co-operate with a column which had been sent out from Bhamo. Although Sikaw is very much nearer Bhamo than Momeit, the hope of being in time to co-operate with our own people incited us to push on with all speed. We also met the Executive Engineer of the district on his way from Mogôk, who told us news—particularly interesting to Lieutenant Anderson—that dacoits had actually had the audacity to attempt a night attack on his house at Mogôk, and had shot in the heel a sepoy who was on sentry inside the stockade, to which they set fire.

Reaching Mogôk on the 12th, a lengthy interview took place with the Deputy-Commissioner, and by the aid of maps and telegrams I got some idea of the situation. Very little reliable information was, however, procurable, either about the gangs or country, but from what was obtained it appeared that the district was invested by large bands of dacoits and rebels, north, east, and south, the usual location of no less than six of which was pointed out to me on the map. Momeit is as yet unexplored by our topographical department, so we were dependent in this respect on local aid. The native maps, although giving the names of villages and a general idea of the country, are very unreliable as regards distances and other points.

The near neighbourhood of Mogôk is singularly adapted for gatherings of dacoits and rebels, for a short distance westward, on the borders of the R. M. District, several adjacent territories meet—Tongpine,

Momeit, Mainlou, and Theebaw—and a gang disturbed in one district can easily move into another. These gangs are most mobile, often marching enormous distances in one night, having none of the impedimenta of regular troops. No commissariat or transport is required, as these marauders live on the unfortunate villages which they molest.

At Mogòk we had a telegram from the Chief Commissioner, containing cheering news of the Bhamo column. This force, under the command of Captain Smith, R.A., was composed of two mountain guns, sixty men of the Hampshire, and one hundred rank and file of the 17th Bengal Infantry. Marching rapidly, they came upon the dacoits on the 7th February, in a very strongly prepared position at a place called Malin, and after half an hour's hard fighting the stockade was carried, but not without serious loss. Lieutenant Stoddart, 17th Bengal Infantry, two men of the Hampshire, and two sepoy were killed, and eight Hampshire men and ten sepoy wounded. This fight was of a more stubborn character than is usual in this country. The behaviour of the Hampshire men was much commended, and Lieutenant Playfair specially distinguished himself by his energy and coolness under fire.

The enemy was followed upon the 8th to Sikaw, and on the following day to Siu, but they did not attempt another stand. It was reported that this band was composed largely of disbanded Chinese soldiers, and some Snider cartridges and boxes were picked up after the engagement.

Most of the above details only reached me after a considerable lapse of time, the main facts merely being telegraphed.

We were thus sent up too late to co-operate with the Bhamo column, for on the day of the fight at Malin, we were far from the scene of action, being only two marches from the Irrawaddy river. Although a severe

blow had been inflicted at Malin, there were still several untouched gatherings around. Chief among these, those at Bingbon and Molo, and one threatening Mogôk itself, under Twinngé Gna Moung, a well-known dacoit leader, so named from his having been the chief at a recent exploit, the burning of the village of Twinngé.

In deciding on our future plan of operations, it was necessary to consider the following points: The usual garrison was short by two companies, and, although two more companies were expected, these would be required for offensive operations; the district was unsettled throughout; large bands circled its borders; and, finally, Mogôk itself was menaced.

Bearing in mind that the first and most important object was the security and tranquillity of the district, I came to the conclusion that, except from Bernardmyo, no men could be withdrawn from the small garrisons of the various posts to strike an offensive blow. The following plan was therefore resolved on: Constant patrols along the roads, Bernardmyo-Thabeitkyn and Momeit-Twinngé; concentration of the surplus available force at Momeit, ready to go for any gangs which came within striking distance of that place. In this the Deputy-Commissioner concurred.

At the request of Mr. Colquhoun, the contingent of Hampshire men at Mogôk was made up to thirty men. No news had yet been heard of the expected reinforcement—two companies from Thagein—but orders were sent them to march on Momeit, after landing at Twinngé. Lieutenant Anderson was to be left in charge at Mogôk. The Deputy-Commissioner was unable to leave Mogôk for a couple of days to go with me to Momeit, so I took this opportunity of visiting Bernardmyo—the only station in the district I had not yet seen—arranging to meet and confer with Mr. Colquhoun at Momeit on the 15th or 16th.

A long and difficult climb of about 2,000 feet leads to a pass over a lofty range close to Tong Meh, after

which a short descent brings the traveller into the Ingouk Valley, the proposed site of a future sanitarium. A good bridle path runs along this valley for about three miles to Bernardmyo, which is situated at the north end of it. The cantonment is healthy and cool, but, owing to the number of blackened charred trees and stumps, caused by hill fires, the landscape has a bare and somewhat grimy appearance.

This disfigurement is to a certain extent redeemed, however, by the grand and sombre forest, luxuriant in foliage, on the slopes of Tong Meh. Burning forest and jungle on the hill-sides is a characteristic of certain hill tribes called Leeshaws, and is very common in this neighbourhood.

Visiting the hospital, we found the men who were wounded at Mobon doing well, with the exception of two rather serious cases—Privates James and Nunnery. At some risk and great discomfort, they had been removed to this better climate for recovery. Two men had already returned to duty; all were cheery, and anxious to have another slap at the dacoits.

Reports from Momeit at this time showed that the dacoits had withdrawn from the neighbourhood, and were concentrated at Bing-bon.

We had ample employment during our one day's stay at Bernardmyo organizing a movable column to go out from Momeit with ten days' rations.

The commissariat and transport arrangements were somewhat difficult, as the strength of the latter department had been much reduced, and was barely sufficient to keep the garrisons rationed, everything having to be brought up all the way from the river. In addition to Momeit, the Hampshire men at Mogók had also to be supplied, and there was no proper accommodation for perishable stores at either place.

These difficulties overcome, Lieutenant Wyld and I arrived at Momeit on the 15th February.

Here we found Second Lieutenant Ozzard, Surgeon

Donaldson, and the men all well and cheerful, but neither had the Deputy Commissioner nor the two companies 27th Madras Infantry arrived.

Tired after a tedious march of twenty-four miles, I sent, with my salaam, a message to the Tsawbwa that I would not see him till next morning. But—bad luck to him—in a few minutes he shuffled into our only wretched room, followed by several dirty retainers. Offered our only chair, down he sat, smoking a huge cheroot. Presently he took off a very soiled turban, let down his long black hair—longer than a woman's—stroked and rolled it up again. His next pleasant performance was to get off his chair, kneel down, and, selecting an opening in the bamboo floor, spit through it. Then, his cheroot going out, he handed it to his chief minister, who, lighting it at the candle, took several whiffs himself, and on his knees presented it to his master. Another minister sat on his knees facing the Tsawbwa, and now and again bent down and kissed the ground. This dirty potentate frequently came and sat chatting with our men, who gave him tobacco.

The climate at Momeit is very hot during the day, but usually cold at night. Although quartered in the so-called palace, the roof was full of chinks which allowed the sun's rays to penetrate, and necessitated a solar topee to protect the head.

The usual bamboo stockade had been constructed round the men's quarters. The bodies of Lieutenant Nugent and Private Carpenter lie under a huge tamarind tree, about one hundred yards from the stockade. Plain teak wood crosses have now been erected over these graves.

Despatches from the Deputy Commissioner, sent by runners from Mogôk, arrive in rapid succession. One day the report is that 1,000 dacoits have crossed the Irrawaddy at Thaghein from Wuntoo's country, going to join Kan Klein; next day, that a large gang had passed the previous night at Kitnapa, making for

Mogôk. Then came news of a night advance on the latter place. This last report proved true, but when the dacoits discovered that spies were out, and our men on the alert ready for their reception, they retired without attacking. Effective steps had been taken for defence, and some of the Hampshire men lay at night in shelter-pits dug on commanding ground outside the stockade.

I now heard that the Deputy Commissioner, who had previously complained of bad health, was not coming to Momeit, as arranged, partly on account of the threatening state of affairs at Mogôk, and that Lieutenant Martindale would take his place.

The next news was of a fight near Mogôk, in which one sepoy was killed and another badly wounded. In accordance with orders issued before I left Bernardmyo, Lieutenant Anderson, with twenty-five military police, Sergeant Drake and twenty-five Hampshire men, started from Mogôk on the evening of the 14th, to attack the threatening gang, intending to surprise them at day-break in their camp at Langsin, about thirty miles from Mogôk. Instead of this, however, the column had not proceeded far, before it encountered the dacoits on their way to attack the place.

Ten men under a havildar were sent on, half-an-hour in front, by Lieutenant Anderson, to warn some of his police at Kathé to be ready to join him. About four miles out, fire was opened on this small party from a pagoda, which they immediately attacked in a most plucky manner. Some hand-to-hand fighting ensued before the dacoits were ejected, but the pagoda was eventually taken and held by the military police until the arrival of the rest of the force. Hearing firing in front, Lieutenant Anderson pushed on rapidly until he was fired on from heights on both sides of the path. It was now nearly dark, but the Hampshire men, steadily advancing, drove back the enemy and rescued the advanced party, who were surrounded in the

pagoda. Fortunately, none of the Hampshire were hit, but some had narrow escapes and one rifle was rendered unserviceable. The dacoits retreated, and Lieutenant Anderson, knowing Mogôk was almost unguarded, returned there, bringing in the dead body of the sepoy (before mentioned) and the wounded private. The conduct of the havildar commanding the advance party was very gallant and much commended. The two companies of reinforcements, 27th Madras Infantry, had by this time reached Momeit, which is five nearly level marches from the river at Twinngé, and everything—transport, rations, medical contingent, etc.,—was now ready, awaiting only the presence of a civil officer, to strike a blow with fifty Hants men and sixty Sepoys. No European officer accompanied the Madras Infantry, which was commanded by a Subadar—a magnificent specimen of a man and soldier—who had highly distinguished himself on a former occasion against dacoits, for which he received a well-earned reward—the order of merit.

We had now been a week at Momeit, yet no tidings had been received of Mr. Martindale, in quest of whom I sent a strong patrol along the Twinngé road.

A telegram received from Mandalay led me to conclude that it was necessary to be in closer communication with headquarters and the Deputy Commissioner, so I determined to return to Bernardmyo, where there was direct wire to Mandalay and Mogôk. Moreover, this resolution was strengthened by the consideration that the officer who was responsible for all could not effectively control the various operations in the district—gangs being, as already mentioned, reported in several directions—twenty-four miles from the telegraph, or out on dour; or at least he could do so better from a central situation in telegraphic communication with the General commanding and the Chief Commissioner.

Major Garfit was therefore directed to take command of the troops at Momeit.

Mr. Martindale, whose delay was caused by an unexpected détour round by Thabeitkyn to Mogòk instead of, as anticipated, from Twinngé—arrived at Momeit the day after our departure.

The Deputy Commissioner was decidedly against an advance upon Bing-bon, which was by all accounts a stronghold of dacoits and rebels, defended by five successive stockades strongly planted on a difficult position around the summit of a hill. Political expediency, however, was Mr. Colquhoun's chief reason against this move: the place being on the borders, action might lead to complications. The question was referred to the Chief Commissioner. It was all but impossible to get any reliable information about the enemy or the country; moreover, the difficulty of obtaining good guides and the absence of any knowledge as to roads were serious obstacles in planning operations.

It was ultimately decided to attack the gathering reported to be at Molo under General Kan Klein first, because Molo was considerably nearer than Bing-bon, and therefore of more importance to the security of Momeit. Moreover, as already explained, the expediency of attacking the latter place was doubtful. In order to have another talk with the Deputy Commissioner, we returned by way of Mogòk. On the evening of our stay there, a tremendous fire broke out in the village. The houses being all constructed of timber and bamboo, these fires are very common, and the scenic effect at night is grand in the extreme.

Second Lieutenant Robson, with fifty Madrassees, was left to guard Momeit, especially watching Bing-bon, while Major Garfit, Second Lieutenant Ozzard, Surgeon Donaldson, and the rest of the force went out.

This party was not fortunate enough to catch the dacoits at Molo, who must have got warning of their approach, probably by the barking of dogs, for, although the birds had flown, the nest was still warm, as witnessed by fires still burning in the deserted villages, and other

evident signs of a hurried departure. One of our Mounted Infantry saddles and a bridle were picked up and brought in.

Although this party had no fighting, they experienced by no means an easy time, but much hard work. The Shwely river had to be crossed and re-crossed, to accomplish which it was necessary to collect boats, and getting the mules and impedimenta across entailed a severe day's work. Some of the men passed the river four times. The party marched altogether about seventy miles in five days, and burnt three villages, before returning to Momeit on the 2nd March.

The departure of a wing of the 19th Madras Infantry from Mandalay to Ruby Mines district, in relief of the Goorkhas who left in September, was now announced, and all arrangements for their march of five days from the river—transport, stations, moving and accommodation of sick—had to be thought of and provided for. Rather a difficult task, about half the mules being laid up with sore backs owing to severe and incessant work, while the sound animals were mostly with Major Garfit.

Meanwhile, the Mandalay mounted military police under Lieutenant Lennard, had arrived at Mogòk, taking Langsin, the place from which the dacoits had attacked Mogòk, on their march up from the Irrawaddy.

They reported that hotbed of rebels as deserted, but that it showed recent traces of a large gathering. The party also brought in a Boh, Hein Khan by name, a leader of some importance, whom they had captured at Marigal. Twenty of the police were sent to Momeit, as a mounted aid to Major Garfit. The rest were left at Mogòk for a time to strengthen Lieutenant Anderson's force, but were eventually ordered to work along the borders of the Ruby Mines and Mandalay districts to the river. With this object they left Mogòk on the 4th March, and, coming across fifteen dacoits at Langsin on the 8th, killed three and made the same number of

prisoners. There were no police casualties. Inspector Underwood commanded this party, Lieutenant Lennard having been sent to Mandalay sick.

On my representation of the state of affairs in the command becoming known at Mandalay, it was proposed to send me reinforcements to organize a strong column at Momeit to take the field for three or four weeks, moving about, and to root out all the gangs in that neighbourhood.

Nothing has been mentioned of the Mogoung column since it started. As this expeditionary force marched far from the telegraph, news took long in travelling. A short account of their doings will be recorded later on; meanwhile at Bernardmyo, on the 6th March, we received the following sad telegram from Bhamo: "Lieutenant Hawker brought in from Mogoung severely wounded in thigh by bamboo stake; three men also severely wounded."

Ultimately, to attack Bing-bon, it was decided to send two mountain guns from Mandalay; fifty more Hampshire men and fifty mules from Shwebo; a medical officer and hospital stores; also rations and reserve ammunition for the whole party for one month. This welcome reinforcement came by steamer up the river to Twinngé, and from thence marched to Momeit. It was under the command of Captain Smith, of the Hampshire regiment, Lieutenant Bruce Lane being in charge of the guns, and Surgeon Henderson accompanied the column.

On application, a couple of heliographs, with some of our trained signallers, were sent up to Bernardmyo from Shwebo, and after some trouble in discovering the best point of vantage, entailing many an ascent to hill tops, we succeeded in opening communication with Momeit, at least twenty miles distant in a straight line, and four thousand feet down in the plain below. Unfortunately, haze over the plain, or smoke from

burning jungle, often prevented the effective working of the instrument.

Some time necessarily elapsed before the expected fresh troops could arrive, and this was employed in getting everything ready for the new expedition.

A small dacoity occurred about this time at Wapyadaung, two traders being killed, and on the 18th March the English mail due on that day failed to arrive.

An ex-dacoit held the contract to carry mails between Bernardmyo and the river, for which he received Rs. 500 per month. This arrangement—a kind of black mail—worked most effectively, the bags arriving weekly with regularity, never having been attacked. The contractor was, however, now wanted by the police, owing to his suspected complicity in one of the recent dacoit exploits. An escort was therefore necessary for the mails, and, as infantry only were available, this proved the cause of delay. The bags eventually arrived, and shortly afterwards we organized an escort of sepoys on mounted infantry ponies.

About the same time a report reached Major Garfit that sixty rebels had left Bing-bon to attack a village—Kanneh—seventeen miles from Momeit. A small force under Second Lieutenant Robson was despatched on the 11th, carrying two days' rations, to disperse this party. The report, however, turned out false, as no enemy was encountered.

Another rumour came in that Prince Sawyanine, hearing probably of the preparations for his benefit, had bolted, but was brought back again by Kachyens, and was now at a village near Bing-bon.

Most inopportunistically at a time when its services were especially wanted, telegraph communication suddenly ceased. Linesmen were sent along to discover and repair the break, but a week passed before communication was re-established.

These breaks, which are of not unfrequent occurrence,

are usually occasioned by the fall of trees in the forest. Dacoits, fortunately for us, rarely touch the telegraph, although, had they the sense to perceive it, they might in this way cause much mischief. They ~~do~~^{have} sometimes, however, use the cut up wire as missiles in their guns.

A messenger sent down to Shwenyoungbin, beyond the break, soon returned with a bundle of telegrams, and among them one which contained the sad news of Lieutenant Hawker's death on the 13th March, at Bhamo. A large aneurism—the result of a stake wound—had formed in the right femoral artery, and he eventually sank under an operation which the medical officers considered necessary. His mother, widow, and one child, besides many friends, are left to mourn his early death. He was well known among a large circle in India and at home, one of the finest amateur horsemen who ever rode a race. Lieutenant Hawker acted as Adjutant during several periods, and his loss is much felt throughout the regiment. He bore his sufferings with unshaken fortitude and cheerful spirit to the last. Strange to say, before he started on this, his last expedition, he had a foreboding of some impending calamity, which presentiment he communicated to one or two of his intimate friends.

On the 13th March the first detachment of the 19th Madras Infantry arrived at Bernardmyo, with Captain Haughton in command, and Lieutenant the Hon. C. Bruce. They had rather a large sick list—a good many cases of fever and diarrhoea. Madrassees do not like the hill climate, which is much too cold for them.

Once more, on the 20th March, we journeyed to Momeit for the purpose of seeing all complete and ready for the start of Major Garfit's column. We found the place terribly hot—over 90 degrees—more unsavoury than ever, and the reinforcements had not yet arrived.

A terrific storm broke just as we sat down to our

frugal meal. All lights were blown out, tremendous peals of thunder, vivid flashes of lightning, and a storm of dust. Dinner being out of the question, all rushed to look to their few goods and chattels. Poor Lieutenant Burton had the roof of his dwelling blown off, and returned soaked to the skin. Lieutenant Wyld and I had better luck, for our faithful servants had rolled up the bedding in their waterproof covers. The rain had come through the roof, however, which was partly battered in; and now the utility (not before dreamt of) of a bamboo floor became apparent, for the water poured through, and boots, etc., escaped a floating. The Hampshire men had everything they possessed saturated at nine o'clock in the evening, and spent an uncomfortable night. The unfortunate natives fared still worse, for some of them were shelterless altogether. It is not the hard work in dacoiting that tries the soldier, but the exposure to sun and rain, the discomfort, and meagre fare.

The following day the Commissioner of the Northern District arrived accompanied by his deputy. The whole village was *en fête*, a small durbar held, dancing girls, etc.

This comfortless Momeit appeared to be a meet place for storms, for we had a recurrence almost every night during our stay, the dust and dirt of the filthy village blowing through our dwellings.

On the 23rd Captain Smith's party arrived all well. They had likewise been caught in similar storms, and were obliged to move from one halting-place which was infected with small-pox.

All being now ready, I ordered a start to be made the following morning, the 24th of March.

The party consisted of Major Garfit (in command), Lieutenant Wyld, Second Lieutenants Ozzard and Robson, and one hundred men Hampshire Regiment; two guns mountain battery, and fifty-seven native gunners under Lieutenant Bruce Lane; one hundred 27th Madras

Infantry, under the Subadar, and twenty mounted military police; Mr. Martindale, political officer, and Surgeon Henderson in medical charge. The division of artillery brought its own complement of mules; fifty, as we have seen, had been sent with the reinforcements for transport purposes, but this, with those already in the command which could be spared, was not enough to keep up a supply of rations for men and animals, so that a large number of bullocks had to be hired in the district to supplement. Since bullocks cannot keep pace with men, their average rate of marching being only two miles an hour with long halts, this unavoidable arrangement much impeded the movements of the force. Running convoys were established at Momeit, to bring up relays of supplies, and thus enable the column to remain out, if necessary, some considerable time.

After riding a short distance with the party and wishing them God-speed, Captain Smith and I returned to Bernardmyo.

Second Lieutenant Burton, 27th Madras Infantry, with fifty of his sepoy, was left in command at Momeit with instructions to forward any news from the front express. He was also appointed Field Treasury Officer.

It was not till the 3rd April that we received any tidings from the expeditionary column. On that evening the welcome news reached us, much to our relief, that Bing-bon had been occupied on the 30th, after taking four stockades, in face of a heavy fire from two of them, without any loss on our side. Ten or fifteen dacoits were killed. The party entrenched themselves at Bing-bon, where the first few nights' rest was disturbed by the enemy's fire and frequent alarms of night attacks.

Owing to the slowness of the bullock transport—which it was impossible to leave behind without a strong escort—and the badness of the roads, seven days were spent between Momeit and Bing-bon.

The halting places at each stage (Kachyen villages) were uninhabitable through filth, so all had to bivouac in the open. Bing-bon itself was no cleaner, and the water supply there scanty and bad.

Lieutenant Wyld, with Corporal Kitching and twenty men, formed the advanced guard, and did most of the fighting. The former was specially brought to notice for the able way in which he carried out this duty, and Corporal Kitching afforded him most efficient support.

After the return of this expedition to Momeit, some time elapsed before sanction was given to break up the column, there being a probability of further operations. Meanwhile reports showed that a good deal of sickness, chiefly fever, prevailed, especially among the Madrassesees, many of whom were unfit for work and needed invaliding. Moreover, the season was far advanced, and scorbutic symptoms began to appear among both British and Natives, owing to the length of time many of them had been without fresh meat or vegetables.

At last—on the 25th April—orders came to send the reinforcements back to Shwebo and Mandalay, leaving one British officer and 100 Natives at Momeit.

No deaths occurred during this period at Bernardmyo, but one private of the Hampshire died suddenly of apoplexy at Mogök, and was buried there.

The incompetent Tsawbwa at Momeit was now ejected by the authorities, and a new ruler—a Shan—put in his place. This gentleman duly arrived, with a large following and much tom-toming, and, like the traditional new broom, commenced his rule with considerable energy.

CHAPTER IV.

BHAMO AND MOGOUNG.

LIFE in Bhamo, if more uncomfortable, was perhaps in a way livelier than that at our other stations—stirring events of frequent occurrence, and expedition after expedition sent out. The first of these under Major Greenaway saw no fighting, and returned on the 17th January. The next one, despatched by Major Dunn, dispersed a rebel gang at Malin, as already described. On this occasion the two worst cases among the Hampshire wounded were Private Richardson, shot through the right lung, and Private Carter, spear wound in the middle of his chest. There were, moreover, several hairbreadth escapes. Lieutenant Stoddart would probably have been first in the stockade had he not received his death wound when almost at the breastwork. Shot through the head, his body fell back into the fork of a tree, one yard from the stockade. The report on this affair recorded that all the Hants men behaved excellently, and the following names were specially mentioned: Sergeant Ley, Lance-Corporal Abbott, Privates Hill, Richardson, Gamblin, Knight, Hatch, Carter, Jerrett, Thearle, and Marshall, the sergeant by his steadiness and control over his men doing right good service. The wounded were tended with the greatest skill and care by Surgeon Castor, who was most energetic, and, along with Lieutenant Playfair, was specially brought to notice.

At the assault of the stockade two Hampshire men followed Lieutenant Stoddart closely. One of these sank to the ground shot through the chest as the former fell;

the other stood by the fallen officer and his wounded comrade, under fire. Besides a quantity of Snider ammunition, some guns, dahs, spears, hats, and flags, and other trophies left in the stockade were taken. Plucky deeds, however, were not all on the side of the Europeans; it is reported that a native of the battery, seeing a British soldier fall, wounded in the leg, preceded by a wound in the arm, tore up his turban, bound up the limb as well as he could, and, picking up the rifle of the prostrate man, stood over him under fire, to keep off any rebel who might attempt to kill the wounded.

In the middle of the night of the 13th February, at Bhamo, the civil and military chiefs were aroused by a message from Mansi (a village at the foot of the Kachyen hills about fifteen miles distant), to say that it had been occupied by dacoits the same evening. A column, consisting of one hundred Europeans and one hundred Natives, together with two guns, started next morning.

Arrived at Mansi, they found the village quiet, and were informed by the headman that there were no dacoits in the neighbourhood. Fires were lighted and the party had just settled down for the night, when a number of shots were fired from the jungle, some going overhead, others falling short, one fell into the fire, scattering the embers about. The men were soon at work with their rifles, but in the darkness little could be accomplished. Later in the night another alarm occurred.

News having reached Captain Smith that Chinese marauders had entered Mansi, he attempted to co-operate with the other column, but failed to catch the dacoits.

All these matters produced considerable excitement in Bhamo, the Chinese traders there demanding a guard for the bazaar and patrols being out nightly, besides which several attempts were made to set fire to the place. The troops returned to Bhamo, but a flying column was held in readiness to move at a moment's notice.

On the 20th February, news was brought to Bhamo that the Katran tribes, aided by Chinese, had occupied the village of Mansi once more, and a column started again next morning, composition the same as formerly.

These continual expeditions left the garrison of Bhamo very weak, making the strain of duty extremely heavy on those left behind—sufficient, indeed, had it been permanent, to break down both officers and men alike. The latter had only about three or four nights in bed—that is, were on guard every fourth or fifth night—and many were employed attending their sick comrades in hospital. Although a good deal of fever prevailed, the percentage of sick up to the present time had not been abnormally high, the only death so far being a case of suicide—Private Wilson, of the Hampshire Regiment, who blew his brains out one night with his rifle. This man had been in low spirits for some days, but his comrades had thought little of it.

Again a party started for Mansi on the 9th March, the route, as usual, along a narrow jungle path. Parading at daybreak, a halt was made after marching nine miles, to rest men and animals. Here some passing Shans reported the rebels to be entrenched at Mansi. Proceeding onwards, about eleven o'clock heavy firing was heard in rear, the enemy having attacked rearguard, animals, and baggage—this on a narrow path with thick jungle on either side.

The main body of the party halted, faced outwards, and lay down, but could see no enemy, the men keeping well in hand, reserving their fire until they could see something to aim at. One gun and eighteen Hants men, with Lieutenants de Winton and Robinson, R.A. were then ordered back to assist the rearguard, which consisted of fifty men 17th Bengal Infantry. On arrival they found the sepoy firing volleys into the jungle, the rebels replying. A naik* at this moment,

* Naik is a sepoy corporal.

struck by a bullet, was killed on the spot. The enemy's fire was now soon silenced, and the advance resumed, with skirmishers in front to prevent further annoyance. Approaching the place where the stockade was expected, a party of Hants men under Lieutenant de Winton worked round by a path, which here branched off, to turn the enemy. These reached quite to the rear of the stockade, but unfortunately only to find it deserted—the dacoits having bolted. Two rebels only were seen rushing across the path. A snap shot from Lieutenant de Winton's revolver appeared to strike one, as he stumbled; two men fired at the other, but both disappeared in the jungle.

Most of these stockades are defended by breastworks, consisting of timbers laid horizontally three or four feet high—an effective protection from infantry fire. After posting sentries and settling down, several shots rang out from the neighbouring jungle, and some bullets whistled overhead. A party sent out in the direction of the fire, returned without seeing anything.

Next morning the same annoyance was resumed, to silence which some volleys were delivered by twenty Hants men, and a gun gave the rebels three rounds of shrapnel. Still bullets kept flying, mostly overhead, but some dropping in the village, and it became necessary eventually to send out a party of Hants men with fixed bayonets to clear the jungle. Another party was also despatched to reconnoitre two villages in the vicinity, but no dacoits were found.

During the afternoon bullets still continued to sing about, but fortunately without hitting anyone. Jungle clearers, protected by a strong covering party, now set to work, and, before turning in, men were placed in favourable positions for firing volleys where they slept.

Next day, the 11th, after some jungle cutting and burning, firing again broke out from the old quarter. A party scoured the jungle for two miles; they came across about a dozen rebels and exchanged shots, but

apparently without damage to either side. This advance had fortunately saved a convoy—which was just arriving—from attack. At ten o'clock the same evening quite a determined fire was opened from three-quarters of a circle round the village. Our people fired a few volleys and four rounds from the mountain guns at the flashes, which produced yells from the jungle. The fire gradually slackened and finally ceased about eleven o'clock. At one time the bullets came pretty thick, some striking the parapet, but the remainder of the night passed quietly.

This desultory petty warfare at Mansi continued at short intervals, the hottest fire being on the 13th, after which there was no more fighting, and the column returned to Bhamo on the 18th March. The rebel firing, though annoying, must have been of the worst description, for during the whole of this small campaign Corporal Martin was the only man of ours struck; three of the 17th Bengal Infantry were killed.

About this time Sergeant Cain, one of our best cricketers, died. Suffering from dysentery, he was sent down from the Mogoung column with Lieutenant Hawker, and shortly after reaching Bhamo was attacked with a virulent type of small-pox. He was isolated outside the fort, but attended by some of the cricket eleven, and succumbed after about a fortnight's illness. The disease had been prevalent in the bazaar. It would be astonishing if Bhamo escaped epidemics, for cattle disease had been rife in the district some considerable time, and most of the carcases were thrown into the Taping River above the town. Owing to the lowness of the river at this season, and consequent sluggishness of its current, these bodies decompose in the stream, and the contaminated water is freely used by natives without boiling or filtering.

It was now determined to post for a time a detachment of British troops at Sikaw, and build a stockade there. Lieutenant De Winton was sent in command

of this party, fifty Hants and fifty 17th Bengal Infantry, which, after three days' hot and troublesome marching along the usual narrow jungle path, with the possibility of an enemy at any point, reached its destination on the 25th March. The site for the entrenchment was marked out, and its construction at once proceeded with. The heat being excessive (about 100°) most of the work was done by natives, paid by the civil authorities. Our men, however, dug the ditch of the fort, working four hours a day.

This detachment remained out some considerable time, until, indeed, most of the men were down with fever.

Major Dunn, who had much responsibility and hard work during his command at Bhamo, which met with the approbation of the authorities at Mandalay, now sent in his papers to retire on a half-pay Lieutenant-Colonelcy. The strain of duty at Bhamo had undermined his health, and he left that place on the 5th of April, Major Gaulter succeeding him in the command.

THE MOGOUNG EXPEDITION.

The expeditionary force by which it was proposed to restore order in the Mogoung district, and punish some tribes who had been interfering with the jade and amber trade there, left Bhamo—as already mentioned in a former chapter—on the 22nd December 1888.

The first part of the journey was accomplished by water. In the upper defile of the river, however, the stream is so strong that boats make but slow progress against it, and marching is a much quicker mode of travelling. The party therefore proceeded by land, and, after a few hard and tedious marches, entailing much hill climbing and a considerable amount of road making, arrived at Senbo on the 28th. At this place a short halt was made to wash clothes, rest, etc. Marching again on the 31st, Mogoung was reached on the 4th January. The road was fairly level, but the Mogoung river had to be crossed and recrossed.

Here a captain of the 17th Bengal Infantry was left in

command, with some of his men, to form a base or dépôt while the rest of the force, under Lieutenant O'Donnell, proceeded to carry out the proposed programme.

Kamein, a small village about 40 miles above Mogoung, was the first object of the expedition. It was necessary to secure this place, because all the jade, amber, and india-rubber trade passes through it. Kamein was said to be held by the enemy, and strongly stockaded. It was taken nevertheless, without loss, on the 11th January.

The only approach to the village was by wading the river for about 200 yards, no boats being available. The high banks on both sides, only forty yards apart, form a defile which might have been defended by the enemy. It was therefore thought advisable to prepare the way by artillery before attacking. The guns came into action at a range of about 800 yards, and the dacoits fled at the second shell, which burst right in the middle of the place. Only a few shots were fired in reply, some of which, however, came within fifty yards of the column. Under cover of the guns, Captain Macdonald, with his Hampshire men, waded up the river, and carried the stockade with little opposition. Most of the village was burnt by the shells; blood was seen here and there, but no bodies were discovered. The Burmans generally manage to carry away their dead and wounded. The rebels decamped to another hostile village, Hweton, about four and a-half miles distant.

As bad luck would have it, small-pox now broke out among the Goorkhas, who had no less than nine cases; consequently the party had to halt in this uninviting and dirty spot until the doctor permitted a move. What the shells had left standing of the village hovels was burnt in hope of staying the small-pox, and a strong stockade was constructed. The first object of the expedition had thus been successfully accomplished, but two other undertakings still to be achieved—the first against Thama, Chief of the Lepei Kachyens

—were for a time delayed, owing to this unfortunate outbreak of small-pox. The troops, however, were by no means idle. The village (Hweton), to which the rebels had retreated from Kabein, was attacked on the 30th. A party proceeded by boat, thus avoiding the direct path, which was reported to be strongly stockaded, and hoping to take the enemy by surprise. When opposite the village, all landed, formed up, and advanced, Captain Macdonald with his men in front, the 17th Bengal Infantry following. Coming across some of the enemy in their paddy fields, several shots were exchanged. The sound of this firing warned the villagers, and the attacking party met with a warm reception. The village was, however, immediately rushed, five dacoits killed, three wounded and a large quantity of paddy destroyed. The only casualty on our side was one Sikh wounded.

Two days later (2nd Feb.), a party under Lieutenant Hawker again went out, this time by the direct path—which was strongly barricaded—to reach the same village. Strange to say the dacoits—who had returned to collect what they had hidden, their fowls, etc., on the first attack—were not on the look-out, and were completely surprised. Eight of them were killed and some others wounded, Lieutenant Richards shooting one with his revolver, and Captain Macdonald another with a rifle. There were about fifty rebels in the place. Even after these were driven out and their houses burnt, they did not move far away.

A third visit was paid to the same place, and on this occasion transport animals were taken and 3,000lbs. of grain carried away. Altogether, in this village thirteen men were killed and about 20,000lbs of paddy destroyed.

At length, on the 12th, it was decided that, should there be no fresh case of small-pox for two days, a start might be made against Thama's stronghold. The 13th arrives, the doctor is eagerly questioned, his reply is satisfactory, preparations are commenced,

getting transport, rations, etc., across the river ready to move from the other side, and on the 15th February the column leaves Kamein on its second exploit.

On the 19th February Thama's capital was stormed, taken, and destroyed. A systematic round was afterwards made of all the villages belonging to the Lepei tribe, twenty-five in number. Every one was burnt, and 149,000lbs. of grain destroyed.

The total list of casualties incurred in this expedition up to the beginning of March was as follows:—One gunner, one naik 17th Bengal Infantry, one Goorkha, and one follower, killed; Corporal Burt, Privates Sevier and Nicholas, Hampshire Regiment, severely wounded; Lieutenant Richards, Hampshire Regiment, slightly wounded by gunshot; Lieutenant Hawker, Private Wilcher, Hampshire Regiment, and one Goorkha severely wounded by spiked bamboos; Captain Macdonald (Hampshire Regiment), Lieutenant O'Donnell (Military Police), three gunners, and five Goorkhas slightly wounded by bamboo stakes. Captain Macdonald's wound (on the foot) did not necessitate his going on the sick list; he continued to do duty, and so did Lieutenant Richards. Four followers, two Goorkhas, and two Sikh police were severely wounded by dah cuts. There was also a case of sunstroke, Private Baldwin, Hants Regiment.

The enemy's losses can only be surmised, but plainly the punishment inflicted on these Lepeis has been a severe one, for not only have they been deprived of shelter, but a great quantity of their grain has been seized.

Most of the Lepei villages are situated high on hill-sides, entailing hard marching to reach them, while in the valleys, especially passing through high grass jungle, where fresh air cannot penetrate, the sun at this season is very hot and powerful.

These dangerous spiked bamboos, or *panjies*, as they are called, are planted in the jungle by the enemy to

stop a rush on their stockades, or to impede a flank movement.

Thama's village is situated some four thousand feet above Kamein, about sixty miles distant, the path leading over a hilly and difficult country, so the troops could not have achieved its capture, and the subsequent work, without considerable hardship.

It is to be hoped that these severe measures may be productive of such peaceful results as will justify their adoption. It seems to be expected that the stern punishment meted out on this occasion will induce the other Kachyen tribes to come in and submit. Perhaps this is a sanguine view, and some think that years may elapse ere this policy succeeds in enforcing order, peace, and industry on the frontiers of Upper Burmah.

One other operation remained to be carried out before the Hampshire men could turn their faces once more towards Bhamo and civilisation—or rather semi-civilisation. The Thié tribe had to be dealt with. The column, which had returned to Mogoung after punishing the Lepei lot, left that place once more on the 11th March for this third and final trip, which was successfully accomplished, and the party then marched homewards, reaching Bhamo again on the 28th March. Those who were not sick or wounded looked in rude health, but in rags, after their hard work. Their behaviour and conduct throughout was admirable,

A mail which left Kamein on February 24th by boats was attacked about five miles down the river, probably by some of the natives whose villages had been burnt. The boatmen and mail carriers managed to escape by jumping into the stream and swimming to the opposite bank, but they lost two boats with all their contents, except the mail bags, which they had, with considerable presence of mind, stuck to.

Most of these raids were ultimately traced to the Tsawbwa of Poukhan—a magnate in the hilly country north-west of Bhamo—or to his instigation, and, late in

the season though it was, measures were taken to oust him.

For this purpose it was determined to organize a large force, General Wolseley to take command.

Preparations, commenced early in April, were rapidly pushed forward, troops being drawn from Mandalay and Shwebo. In fact, the latter station was so denuded of British troops—every Martini rifle available being requisitioned—that the few cripples left had to do guard with Sniders borrowed from the 27th Madras Infantry, and our respected Bandmaster nearly broke his heart, over the departure of his bandsmen, some of whom had to shoulder the musket and march.

The total force collected was 250 British, 250 natives, and two mountain guns.

Lieutenants de Montmorency, Richards, and Johnstone and 101 Hampshire men formed our contingent, and Captain Macdonald was appointed staff officer to General Wolseley.

The troops, which were divided into two columns, one under Major St. Paul, Rifle Brigade, left Bhamo, about the middle of April under a scorching sun.

Poukhan's habitation is some 4,000 feet above the sea, and was said to be strongly stockaded; moreover 400 Chinamen were believed to have joined the Tsawbwa. Our force being a formidable one, the rebels evidently considered discretion the better part of valour, for they did not stand. Little opposition was offered, all the enemy's villages were destroyed, and the troops returned to Bhamo about the first week in May, all well.

Captain Macdonald was appointed station staff officer, and it was now hoped that matters would settle down in the Bhamo district, and remain so at least during the approaching rains, the most unhealthy season at this very malarious station.

CHAPTER V.

To return to headquarters at Bernardmyo and events happening in the Ruby Mines district. On the 3rd of April information was received that the police stockade at Mogôk, then occupied by Lieutenant Johnson with a company of his regiment, the 19th Madras Infantry, had been burnt down and most of the property contained in it destroyed.

An inquiry into the cause of the fire and the amount of damage and loss sustained was ordered.

The village of Thabeitkyn was the scene of a rather clever exploit by dacoits, on the night of the 4th April.

It may be remembered that this station on the Irrawaddy is the landing place for Bernardmyo, and the high road to the Ruby Mines, so people at Mandalay very naturally took a livelier interest in a disturbance there than in those occurring on the remote frontiers.

On this occasion, the dacoits, surmising that the villagers, panic-stricken, would, when attacked, make across the river, posted their main body on the west bank, while a few men attacked Thabeitkyn, which lies on the other side. This arrangement succeeded admirably, for, as soon as a few shots had been fired into the village, the Burmans hastened to cross in boats and rafts, and were adroitly plundered on landing at the other bank. No personal injury, however, was inflicted by these looters. Information was despatched to the Deputy-Commissioner of the district (Shwebo), and Inspector Murray of the police was ordered out around Thabeitkyn.

About the same time news reached Bernardmyo that

a village (Wibaung) between Twinngé and Sagadaung, had been attacked by a band of dacoits under Twinngé Gna Maung, and that food supplies and bullocks had been seized by them.

To deal with this gang a party of thirty Madrassesees, under Lieutenant the Honourable C. Bruce, 19th Madras Infantry, was despatched on the 8th, with ten days' rations. Inspector Underwood of the police, who was acquainted with the languages and had with him a useful Shan spy, and who had, moreover, done some good work against these rascals, accompanied the troops. Their orders were to work in the direction of Sagadaung-Wibaung, and act as information indicated.

The new Tsawbwa was marching from the river at this time with a large following, and was likely to meet Lieutenant Bruce, so that officer was specially cautioned not to mistake the Tsawbwa troops for the enemy and fire into them.

Arrived at Sagadaung, Lieutenant Bruce received a report that three hundred dacoits were located in the jungle six miles from Wibaung. The Shan spy sent out to verify this information shortly returned with the news that he had found the dacoit camp deserted and the jungle left burning. By the footmarks it appeared that the gang had gone in the direction of Twinngé.

It was further reported that another band had its headquarters in the fastnesses of the mountains which form the Kin Valley, three most difficult marches from Sagadaung, and accessible only by a footpath impassable even by mules.

Lieutenant Bruce therefore determined to take the latter lot first, and was about leaving Sagadaung with this object when a party of villagers came in, and announced that they had been attacked and robbed by dacoits. Leaving a small baggage guard at Sagadaung, Lieutenant Bruce at once set out with 24 men, the looted villagers showing the way. He came up with the dacoits about eight miles from Sagadaung, and

surprised them at their food. After firing a few shots the enemy made off, crossing the river Kin, and here many of them were shot in the water. Three bodies were picked up on the river bank, while several more were carried down by the stream, and from the blood-stains on both banks it was evident that a considerable number had been wounded. Among the slain was picked up the body of a Boh (Kan Khan), one of Twinngé Gna Maung's chief lieutenants. It was identified by the Shan, whose testimony was confirmed by the discovery of a chit* found on the body from Gna Maung, containing that chief's orders to work round about Sagadaung.

After this successful little exploit the energetic Bruce proposed to go for Twinngé Gna Maung in the fastnesses of the Kin valley, and for this purpose a reinforcement, consisting of Sergeant Kemp, Corporal Pantry, and twenty Hants men, were sent to him.

Hearing, however, on the evening of the 11th, that Gna Maung or one of his gangs was in the vicinity of a village called Pinkhan, Lieutenant Bruce marched in that direction next morning. On the way there a small party of dacoits was chased and fired on, and two bullocks were recovered from them and returned to the owners. These robbers were evidently taking provisions to some band in the neighbourhood. Blood was found in the tracks of the retreating dacoits, but no bodies were discovered. Receiving no information on arrival at Pinkhan, and hearing that small-pox was prevalent at that place, the party returned to Sagadaung.

It was now pretty certain that the main body of the dacoits had their headquarters in the dense jungle recesses of the Kin Valley, and there appeared to be small chance of surprising them from the Sagadaung side, as they knew our people were about, and moreover the distance and difficulty of the path were great.

* Note.

For these reasons Lieutenant Bruce wisely proposed to return to Bernardmyo, get fresh rations there, and after a short halt, proceed to Kin Bridge, which is at the upper end of the valley of the same name, and from there work downward against the dacoit stronghold. This plan also afforded a better chance of catching the gang off their guard. Some of Mr. Underwood's men were left to follow up the dacoits, and bring information of their whereabouts to Bernardmyo, where the remainder of the party arrived on the 16th.

On the 23rd Lieutenant Bruce, with a party of the same strength as before, again started—this time for Kin Bridge—to carry out the proposed plan.

Several villages were visited in the mountain recesses, coolies being employed to carry kits and rations, as the jungle was impassable even by mules. Information brought in, however, proved incorrect, and the party, much to their disgust, did not meet with the success anticipated. The dacoits, moreover, must have got warning of their approach, for at Moungouk, the last village visited, all that the party saw was a few men running over the opposite hill. Some bullets were sent after these at about 400 yards range. A quantity of paddy was found hidden in the jungle round about. Both village and grain were destroyed, and Bernardmyo was again reached on the 1st of May.

While the Bing-bon column was waiting at Momeit, either to go out again or to break up, news arrived that the district of Namkan had been invaded by Chinese filibusters on the 2nd April, to the number of about 400. It was said that they had overrun and destroyed the town of the same name, and that their intention was to join another party in an attack on Bhamo after reducing Namkan. A few days afterwards this news was happily supplemented by a wire to the effect that the Myosa* of

* A kind of Tsawbwa.

Namkan, having collected levies, had fought and beaten these invaders at Sélan, and slain their leader. Scattered bands being still at large robbing and plundering, the Chinese authorities instructed the Tsawbwas of Namkan and Maigmow to arrest and execute them. This had an important bearing on the detention of Major Garfit's column at Momeit. Lieutenant Daly, Assistant Superintendent, Shan States, was expected to be at Namkan on the 19th, with a force of military police. Mr. Hertz had also been moving about Mainlon-Tongpine territory with another force, accompanied by the Tsawbwa of the former place. This officer reached Mogòk on the 22nd April, and proceeded to work towards Tautha—recently a hotbed of insurgents.

The district was now fairly quiet, the season far advanced for operations, the rains approaching, and the active time for dacoiting nearly over. A short leave of absence had been granted me, a rest of which I was glad to avail myself, after not a little anxiety and responsibility. So, taking a couple of days at Shwebo *en route*, I turned my face towards England.

Major Braddon relieved me in command of the district, and the Major-General commanding in Burmah met us on his way up to visit Bernardmyo at Shweny-oungbin, where we spent a day together. In this terai district my adjutant and I probably contracted the seeds of malaria, for we both suffered from fever and ague afterwards.

Engrossed in affairs, we had not much spare time while at Bernardmyo, and, except an occasional ascent of Tong Meh, had little recreation. The dense jungles there are mostly unexplored, and in many parts all but impenetrable, except by the most ardent of sportsmen. Nevertheless, sambhur and barking deer were occasionally brought in by the men, and the venison was much appreciated as a change of fare, commissariat beef being of the very toughest description. Jungle

fowl and black partridge are plentiful, but difficult to get at. Herds of wild elephant roam in the forests, but are rarely seen. Lieutenant Bruce was most energetic in pursuit of game, walking enormous distances. Another amusement—ruby hunting—was sometimes tried. Wading in the bed of a mountain stream, handfuls of gravel and sand were sifted in a tin perforated with small holes, and likely looking stones picked out. Nothing of any value was obtained, however, as far as I could learn—the usual result being a few ruby-coloured stones, little larger than a pin-head, and worth, I imagine, a few shillings per pound.

The Hampshire men proved themselves excellent walkers in these stupendous mountains. Parties had constantly to march from Momeit to Bernardmyo for rations, escorts, etc., and any men who wished were allowed to remain at Bernardmyo, being relieved by others. Few, however, availed themselves of this privilege, preferring to return to Momeit to “see it out,” as they said. Double marches (24 miles) were of frequent occurrence until it was found advisable to stop the practice, as it resulted in galls and sore backs for the mules.

We had now spent three months in the Ruby Mines district, and on leaving it I felt that work and responsibility had been considerably lightened by the able support always zealously accorded me by every officer under my command, and that the gallant conduct, patience, and soldierlike spirit shown by the Hampshire men was most helpful and much to be commended.

Before relinquishing his command on April 1st, Major General White recommended that all the troops serving in Upper Burmah at that date should receive a medal.

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

LIST of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Men of the 1st Battalion the Hampshire Regiment, who were killed and wounded in action whilst serving in Upper Burma up to 13th May, 1889.

Regimental No.	Rank and Name.	Nature of Casualty.	Date.	Place.
—	Captain Macdonald	Slight wound foot by bamboo	—	Mogoung Expedition.
—	Lieutenant Richards	" " hip " spent ball	14-1-89	" Mobon, near Monnet.
—	Lieutenant Nugent, W. T. H.	Killed in action	21-2-89	Mogoung Expedition.
1847	Hawker, W. C.	Died of wounds 13-3-89	14-1-89	Mobon, near Monnet.
1076	Private Roberts, C.	Killed in action	19-1-89	"
1108	Carpenter, W.	"	7-2-89	Malin.
777	Hill, T.	"	7-2-89	"
1692	Catchpool, W.	"	14-1-89	Mobon, near Monnet.
1718	James, W. . .	"	14-1-89	"
1700	Nunnery, A.	"	14-1-89	"
1802	Cooper, T.	"	14-1-89	"
398	Hanson, P.	"	14-1-89	"
1211	Barnes, E.	"	14-1-89	"
2627	O'Connor, W.	"	14-1-89	"
	Lance-Corporal Abbott	Gunshot wound of left arm; amputation at upper third.	7-2-89	Malin.
743	Private Knight, A.	Slight wound in thigh	7-2-89	"
1537	Dry, G.	Severe wound in arm	7-2-89	"
449	Mills, H.	Severe wound in the thigh and arm	7-2-89	"
1930	Gamblin, C.	Severe wound in thigh	7-2-89	"
467	Richardson, C.	Dangerous penetration; wound of lung	7-2-89	"
1322	Hatch, S.	Slight wound in arm	7-2-89	"
1452	Carter, H.	Severe perforatory wound in chest from spear	7-2-89	"
999	Prince, I.	Slight wound in arm	7-2-89	"
1567	Lance-Corporal Bush, W.	Severe wound in chest and left leg	21-2-89	Mogoung Expedition.
1485	Private Nicholas, Geo.	Severe wound in right thigh	21-2-89	"
1019	Sivier, A.	Severe compound fracture of right tibia	21-2-89	"
—	Lance-Corporal Martin	Wounded	—	Mausi.

